

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 01081 01 OF 02 241341Z
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7022
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL HAMBURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 1081

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EALR, EEWT, EWWT, EAIR, ELTN, DA, FR, GW, JA, UK, UR
SUBJECT: USSR-WESTERN TRANSPORTATION RELATIONS

SUMMARY: RECENT MEETING OF WESTERN TRANSPORTATION OFFICERS IN MOSCOW REVEALED FOLLOWING ITEMS OF INFORMATION: FRG-USSR EXPERTS ON ROAD AND MARITIME TRANSPORT HAVE MET OR WILL MEET IN FRG. UK RECEIVED RATE INCREASE ON UK-BALTIC TRADE AND ADDED ANOTHER RO-RO SHIP TO THAT TRAFFIC. FRENCH WILL TRY THEIR HAND AT MARINE CARGO INSURANCE TALKS WITH SOVIETS. DANISH SHIPPER OBTAINED AN ALMOST 50 PCT BARGAIN ON TRANS-SIBERIAN LANDBRIDGE. SOVIETS AND JAPANESE HAVE ATTEMPTED TO SET UP JOINT SHIPPING COMPANY. SUPERSONIC TU-144 HAS BEEN HAVING ENGINE AND FUEL CONSUMPTION PROBLEMS. THERE MAY BE AN AVIATION FUEL SHORTAGE IN TASHKENT. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE RAISED DURING JANUARY 19 INFORMAL
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 01081 01 OF 02 241341Z

MEETING OF WESTERN TRANSPORTATION OFFICERS IN MOSCOW.

ROAD

2. FRG REPRESENTATIVE INDICATED THAT FRG-USSR EXPERT GROUP MEETINGS, ON WHICH FRG TRANSPORT MINISTER GSCHEIDL HAD INSISTED DURING HIS MOSCOW VISIT LATE 1977, HAD BEGUN. FIRST TO MEET

WERE ROAD TRANSPORT EXPERTS, SITTING IN BONN FROM JANUARY 17 TO 20. SOVIET DZEGATION WAS HEADED BY CHIEF OF FOREIGN RELATIONS OF MINISTRY OF MOTOR TRANSPORT OF RUSSIAN REPUBLIC KONDAUROV, AND FRG DELEGATION BY DEPUTY DIRECTOR IN FEDERAL MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT WOELKER (PHON.). THEY DEALT WITH THREE PRIMARY SUBJECTS.

A) RESTRICTION OF ROUTES IN USSR. GERMAN TRANSPORTERS NOW MAY USE ONLY THREE ROUTES WITH NO MORE THAN USUAL VISA HASSLE: BREST-MOSCOW, SHIGINYA-KIEV, FINNISH BORDER-LENINGRAD. OTHERS ARE AVAILABLE ONLY WITH GREAT DIFFICULTY. SOVIETS USUALLY SAY REASON IS LACK OF TECHNICAL FACILITIES ALONG ROUTES. IN FACT, HOWEVER, OTHER ROUTES ARE NO WORSE THAN THOSE NORMALLY PERMITTED.

?) VISAS. IN 1977 SOVIETS APPLIED FOR AND RECEIVED 2200 VISAS ASSOCIATED WITH ROAD TRANSPORT. THEY WANT MORE FOR 1978. FRG FEELS 2200 SUFFICIENT, BUT ALSO VIEWS USSR INTEREST IN HAVING MORE AS ONE OF FEW LEVERS AT THEIR DISPOSAL IN THIS ONE-SIDED FIELD. C) CHIEFLY TECHNICAL QUESTIONS TO DO WITH CUSTOMS REGULATIONS AND INSURANCE. GERMANS VIEW EARLY POSITIVE MOVEMENT IN THESE AREAS AS HIGHLY UNLIKELY.

MARITIME

3. SECOND GROUP OF FRG-USSR EXPERTS TO MEET WILL BE MARITIME. THEY WILL CONVENE IN GERMANY FROM JANUARY 23-27, MOVING FROM BONN TO BREMEN TO HAMBURG WHERE THE MAIN TALKS WILL ACTUALLY BE HELD AT THE BRANCH OF THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION. USSR DELEGATION WILL BE HEADED BY CHIEF OF FOREIGN RELATIONS OF USSR
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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 01081 01 OF 02 241341Z

MINISTRY OF MERCHANT MARINE AVERIN. FRG TEAM AGAIN UNDER LEADERSHIP OF WOELKER. BASIC TOPICS WILL BE BALTIC SHIPPING, EXISTING AGREEMENTS, CROSSTRADES, HUMANE TREATMENT (SIC) AND TRANS-SIBERIAN LANG BRIDGE.

4. UK REP SAID THAT AT RECENT MEETING OF WORKING GROUP OF UK-USSR JOINT MARITIME COMMISSION AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED THAT FREIGHT RATES CHARGED BY UNITED AND BALTIC COMPANY COULD BE INCREASED BY 16 PERCENT. UK VAINLY SOUGHT MORE. MEANWHILE, BRITISH HAVE ADDED ONE RO-RO SHIP TO UK/BALTIC RUN IN HOPES THAT UK SHARE OF TRAFFIC MIGHT GO UP TO 25 PCT FROM 15-20 PERCENT.

5. FRENCH REP INDICATED THAT EARLY DECEMBER VISIT OF USSR MINISTER OF MERCHANT FLEET GUZHENKO TO FRANCE HAD BEEN STRICTLY CEREMONIAL ON OCCASION OF TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF FRANCE-USSR BILATERAL MARITIME AGREEMENT. HE ALSO SAID THAT FRENCH MARINE CARGO INSURANCE DELEGATION, HEADED BY BALAEISK (PHON), WOULD BE IN MOSCOW JAN 30 - FEB 2, WHEN THEY WOULD BE MEETING WITH NOVOZHILOV OF INGOSSTRAKH. EMBOFF RECAPPED RECENT UK-US EFFORTS IN INSURANCE FIELD.

6. DANISH REP HAD INTERESTING NOTE TO ADD ON TRANS-SIBERIAN

LANDBRIDGE RATES. NORMAL SHIPPING FARE FROM NORTHERN EUROPE TO PACIFIC IS \$3000 FOR STANDARD CONTAINER. FOR PARTICULAR DANISH SHIPMEN OF FORTY CONTAINERS, WEST-EAST, SOVIETS FIRST OFFERED \$2000/CONTAINER FOR WST-EAST SHIPMENT VIA TRANS-SIBERIAN, THEN BARGAINED DOWN TO \$1600, AT WHICH PRICE SHIPMENT WAS ACTUALLY CARRIED OUT.

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 01081 02 OF 02 241317Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MOSCOW 1081

7. DANISH REP ALSO PASSED ON REPORT RECEIVED FROM THEIR EMBASSY TOKYO TO EFFECT THAT, ON DECEMBER 22, BANK OF JAPAN APPARENTLY SEIZED WITH REQUEST (FROM PARTIES UNKNOWN) TO APPROVE ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT VENTURE OF THREE JAPANESE TRANSPORTATION COMPANIES AND ONE SOVIET COMPANY. NAME OF NEW ENTERPRISE TO BE NIPPON-SOVIET-TRANSPORTATION (NISOTRA), CAPITALIZED AT TWENTY MILLION YEN, 40 PERCENT SOVIET SOVIET. DANISH REPORT WENT ON THAT OTHER SHIPPING COMPANIES AS WELL AS JANPANese FONMIN ARE WORRIED ABOUT THIS REQUEST. STUDY COMMITTEE HAS BEEN SET UP, WITH VETO POWER OVER PROJECT. HOWEVER, JAPANESE FONMIN IS REPORTEDLY EQUALLY WORRIED ABOUT THIS PROCEDURE - FEARING AN ABRUPT TERMINATION COULD CAUSE DIPLOMATIC PROBLEMS, AND IS ATTEMPTING TO ARRANGE WITHDRAWAL OF ORIGINAL APPLICATION. DECISION SHOULD HAVE BEEN REACHED BY END OF DECEMBER, BUT DANES HAD NO FURTHER INFORMATION. (ANYTHING EMBASSY TOKYO MIGHT HAVE ON NISOTRA WOULD BE APPRECIATED.)

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 01081 02 OF 02 241317Z

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8. FRG AND DUTCH REPS PUT TOGETHER FOLLOWING SLANT ON TU-144 DIFFICULTIES, DERIVED FROM OWN EMBOFFS' TRIPS AND OBSERVATIONS, AND COMMENTS BY ACTUAL CREW MEMBERS TO MEMBERS OF THEIR COUNTRIES' PRESS CORPS. IN ADDITION TO WHATEVER NOISE POLLUTION PROBLEMS MAY EXIST (MOSCOW 17982 AND OTHERS), THERE EXISTS A TECHNICAL PROBLEM WITH THE MOTORS WHICH FORCES CREWS TO FLY ON SUPER-RICH FUEL MIXTURE. THIS ENTAILS CONSIDERABLY HIGHER FUEL CONSUMPTION THAN WOULD BE CASE AT NORMAL MIXTURE, A PROBLEM WHICH IS PARTICULARLY PRONOUNCED TOWARD UPPER LIMITS OF SUPERSONIC'S DESIGN SPEED. EFFECT IS TO LIMIT TU-144'S RANGE TO ABOUT 4000 KILOMETERS. IF THIS IS TRUE, IT PROVIDES FAR MORE UNDERSTANDABLE REASON FOR SOVIETS' FAILURE TO DATE TO PUT TU-144 INTO MOSCOW-KHABAROVSK SERVICE, DESPITE THEIR OPENLY STATED DESIRE TO DO SO.

9. LUFTHANSA-AEROFLOT POOLING MEETING WILL BE HELD IN MOSCOW JANUARY 26-27, FRG REP SAID. GERMANS HAVE BEEN BASICALLY SATISFIED WITH OPERATIONS UNDER 1972 POOLING AGREEMENT, BUT SOVIETS ARE SEEKING FOURTH ROUTE, MOSCOW-DUESSELDORF. HE SAID DECEMBER POOLING MEETING IN COLOGNE WAS STRICTLY TECHNICAL, DEALING WITH CLEARANCE QUESTIONS.

9. FRENCH REP SAID HE HAD SEVERAL MUTUALLY REINFORCING STORIES OF FLIGHT FUEL CONSERVATION EFFORTS IN TASHKENT, CONSISTING OF DELAYING, CANCELING AND COMBINING FLIGHTS IN ORDER TO AVOID MINIMALLY REMUNERATIVE PARTIAL PAYLOADS.
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